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ABSTRACT

Stated goals and intent of Adult Education Act of 1966 and its amendment, progress toward those goals in terms of target population are examined. Ways of reaching target population, and consequences of suggested changes in adult clientele and of influence of Congressional appropriations or funding levels on meeting of those goals are considered. Conclusions are: intent of Adult Education Act of 1966 is to eliminate poverty; unreached are prime target population of young, unemployed, elementary-level males; present easily-reached and served population has goal of secondary completion; alternate delivery systems exist which do reach and teach prime target population; present methods of evaluation defeat purpose of legislation; present funding levels eliminate service to elementary-level students because of added expense of service to lower levels and punitive results of evaluation of that service. (Author/NF)

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Rethinking the Act

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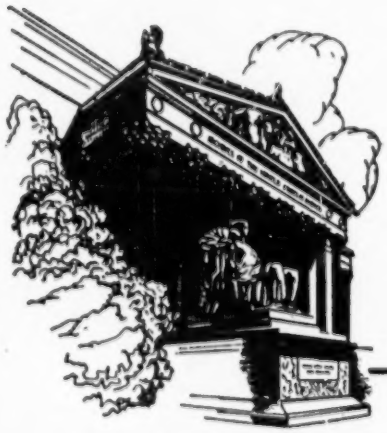

RULES AND REGULATIONS
FOR THE
ADULT EDUCATION ACT OF 1966
(Title III, P.L. 89-750)

AC012 914

Issue 4, July, 1972

Rethinking the Act: Progress Toward Meeting the Goals of the Adult Education Act of 1966

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The Appalachian Adult Education Center (AAEC) is a multi-purpose research and demonstration agency dedicated to the improvement of the quality of adult basic education throughout the thirteen state Appalachian region.

Toward that end, the Center conducts research on the nature of the adult learner, administers demonstrations of exemplary adult learning programs, trains teachers and administrators in modern methods and techniques of adult instruction, and fosters the development and spread of preferred adult education practices particularly suited to the needs of rural undereducated adults.

PURPOSE

The purposes of this paper are (1) to examine the stated goals and intent of the Adult Education Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-750) and its amendment (P.L. 91-230); (2) to examine progress toward those goals in terms of target population; (3) to consider ways of reaching that target population; and (4) to consider the consequences of suggested changes in adult clientele and of the influence of Congressional appropriations or funding levels on the meeting of those goals.

Where we were supposed to go:

The intent and stated goals of the Adult Education Act of 1966

The Congress of the United States has expressed concern about adult illiteracy since the Census of 1840 exposed large numbers of illiterates in the population. Since then legislation designed to alleviate the problem of illiteracy among the adult population has continuously been proposed. Yet, only in periods of national crisis has legislation actually been enacted. At the beginning of the century when the country was trying to absorb millions of immigrants, Americanization programs were provided by Congress. During the Great Depression of the 1930's literacy training was offered in conjunction with the Civil Conservation Corps, the Work Progress Administration, and the National Youth Corps. During the 1940's literacy training was provided to the military. By contrast, between 1910 and 1930 eighteen pieces of legislation designed to fight adult illiteracy were proposed, much of it reported out of committee and argued on the floors of the Senate and the House, but none of it enacted.[1]

Poverty--Adult Education linked

With the growing awareness of the 1960's of the economic deprivation and deprived life styles of certain groups within our society, compounded by the concern over the growing militancy of at least one of those groups, Congress enacted a package of legislation that again included literacy or basic education. Part of that legislation, the Adult Education Act of 1966, was designed specifically to attack two precursors of poverty: inadequate academic skills and concomitant lacks in coping skills (as they are variously defined--attitudes, self-esteem, social-living skills and interpersonal skills). The intent of the current legislation is to eliminate poverty in absolute terms. There seems to be a stance that there will always be discrepancies of privilege where there is free enterprise, but that the bottom of the range of privilege need not include starvation or the other physical or emotional deprivations that presently exist.

[1]Karen Reagle Kruzel, doctoral research, Department of Education, University of Chicago. Apparently the manpower demands of W W I were less urgent than those of W W II.

Intent: poverty eradicated

The intent of the current legislation is not to provide for the right of each American citizen to a minimum level of education, however strongly we may feel that that right does exist. With the generally acknowledged tremendous speed of change in this country, there is a need for further legislation to extend public support to education for all age groups so that the populace may learn to adjust to that change, but presently legislation exists to deal with one specific need for change: the eradication of poverty.

The tools to be used to eradicate poverty to fulfill the intent of the Adult Education Act of 1966 are academic organizations. In other words, the adult education organizations are means goals to serve the primary goal of the elimination of poverty. Other parts of the antipoverty legislation support the tools of organizations which provide job training, decent housing, early childhood education, health care and so on--that is, they provide services designed to eliminate both the precursors and the results of poverty.

To eliminate poverty, the Adult Education Act of 1966 listed as its stated goals:

(1) to overcome English language limitations

(2) to improve education for occupational training and more profitable employment

(3) to develop more productive and responsible citizens.[2]

Act amended

It is, of course, the intent of that large group who believes that modern-day man cannot exist amicably and productively in society without continual education that the present Act will serve

[2]Adult Education Act of 1966, P.L. 89-750, Section 302.

as a precedent for extending public support for educational opportunities to all of the American population, in addition to those served now--the very young, the very poor, and the quite-well-off (college students). Even the very poor, now being served by the legislation, are only receiving training for the here and now. The skills they are developing will not be useful to them in a few years according to economists and sociologists. To accomplish this extension of opportunities will require an extension of existing legislation and also new legislation. One such extension was accomplished by the 91st Congress in 1970 by the amendment of the Adult Education Act of 1966:

> *It is the purpose of this title to expand educational opportunity and encourage the establishment of programs of adult public education that will enable all adults to continue their education to at least the level of completion of secondary school and make available the means to secure training that will enable them to become more employable, productive, and responsible.*[3]

Basic education redefined

The intent of the amendment remains that of the original legislation--to help eliminate poverty. Adult basic education was added to extend at least to the level of completion of secondary school. One explanation for this extension of purpose might be to indicate that the former objective of providing elementary level education for basically illiterate adults had been achieved and that now the need existed to provide adults with secondary level instruction. This is not so. In fact, as the First Annual Report of the National Advisory Committee on Adult Basic Education pointed out:

> *The Adult Basic Education Program has reached only a few of the 24 million adults in its immediate target group. Each year, this group is increased by a million school dropouts and an undetermined number of foreign-born adults.*[4]

Another possible explanation for the extension of the definition of basic education is that the former definition was inadequate to meet the primary goal of the elimination of poverty. Under the amended Act the means goal is high school equivalency, which in the studies of the Appalachian Adult Education Center has been found to equate with functional literacy.[5] The reasons for the extension of the formal organizational purposes of the Adult Education Act of 1966 from an emphasis on elementary education for adults to the addition of secondary-level adult education programs are many; some of the possible consequences are discussed below.

It is assumed that: (1) there is a relationship between low literacy skills and poverty both in terms of income and of life style; and (2) the primary goal of the Adult Education Act of 1966 is to eradicate extreme poverty. The position taken here is that this primary goal is not being met and that it is not being met because: (1) there is a discrepancy between the goals of the legislation and the goals of easily reached students; (2) specialized program designs for the prime target population (poor, elementary-level adults) have not been widely instituted; (3) the measures of success (evaluation) of programs have not been functional in fulfilling the intent of the legislation; and (4) Congressional funding has not been at a level commensurate with getting the job done.

[3]Title III - Amendments to the Adult Education Act of 1966, P.L. 91-230, Section 302.

[4]Adult Basic Education--Meeting the Challenge of the 1970's First Annual Report of the National Advisory Committee on Adult Basic Education to the President of the United States and Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, August, 1968), p. 4.

[5]Functional literacy defined as the ability to read, write, speak, and compute at a level which is functional, i.e., adaptive and flexible in new situations. Examples: the average readability level of the rules of the road (drivers' manuals) in the thirteen states with Appalachian counties is 10.4. The average readability level of coal mine safety regulations is at the 20th reading level (post Ph. D.). The GED may be successfully completed, in AAEC experience, with 10.5 reading and computational levels. Although not possible under existing legislation, AAEC longitudinal studies seem to indicate that for the very poor GED graduate, continued educational upgrading is necessary past high school equivalency. (See West Virginia Long-Range Follow-Up).

Where we have been:

The search for achievable goals*

In the short history of the adult basic education program since the 1964 legislation, the issue of goals and the direction that adult education organizations should take in attracting and serving a clientele has been persistent. Preliminary explorations in which these authors were involved,[6] as well as other evaluative and descriptive studies conducted in New Hampshire,[7] Mississippi,[8] Missouri,[9] New York,[10] Wyoming,[11] and West Virginia[12] have indicated that the ABE program has not been achieving the purposes of the 1966 legislation in terms of its target population. The national ABE program has seemed subject to goal modification. This could be true simply because the adult basic education program has not been successful in attracting or holding Level I and II adult students, who require elementary-level, literacy education--the very poor. As an evaluation team observed in New Hampshire:

> *(1) Relatively few ABE students are members of the "hard-core" of undereducated adults in New Hampshire, and (2) the priorities in the New Hampshire state plan for ABE classes to be scheduled first for the lower level (grades 1-4) and next for the higher level (grades 5-8) do not seem to be met.*[13]

In 1969 Perryman's study of the Wyoming ABE program indicated that the main reason students enrolled in the program was to pass the GED or high school equivalency test.[14] Eighty percent of the total ABE enrollment in Wyoming had completed seventh grade of regular school or above.[15] Although functioning levels of reading and computation are far from synonymous with years of schooling, the Adult Education Act did specify that the "functional illiterate" (defined, perhaps erroneously, as one with less than five years of schooling) was to be the chief target of educational programs.

Client needs requires goal shift

In an educational organization, operational goals are often reflective of the needs and aspirations of the clientele which it serves. That is, in order to acquire the support among students necessary to pursue goals, the organization must satisfy the needs of the student population available to it, even though the stated objectives suggest accomplishment of different goals. This is especially true if educational organizations have little or no control over the admission and retention of students who participate in the program. Carlson developed a classification of possible two-factor relationships between service organizations and their clientele based on the factor of who makes the decision about participation in the program (selectivity).[16]

*This section draws heavily on the research completed by Gene W. Scholes and supported by the Appalachian Adult Education Center. Gene W. Scholes, "Adult Basic Education: A Case Study in Goal Determination" Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1970.

[6] Evaluation Study of Kentucky Adult Basic Education Program, Frankfort, Kentucky, State Department of Education, Division of Adult Education, 1969.

[7] Survey of Adult Basic Education in New Hampshire, Washington, D. C., National Association for Public School Adult Education, 1969.

[8] Emmett T. Kohler and Don F. Seaman, Adult Basic Education in Mississippi: An Evaluation, Jackson, Mississippi: The Mississippi State Department of Education and the Bureau of Educational Research, Mississippi State University, 1969.

[9] William D. Kirk. An Analysis of Adult Education in Missouri. (Ed. D. thesis) Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas, 1968.

[10] Adult Basic Education, New York State: A Two Year Study, 1965-67. Albany, New York: New York State Education Department, Bureau of Basic Continuing Education, 1968.

[11] Bruce C. Perryman, State and Local Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program Evaluation Survey for Wyoming, Cheyenne, Wyoming: Wyoming State Department of Education, 1969.

[12] Charles Divita, Jr., Adult Basic Education: A Study of the Backgrounds, Characteristics, Aspirations, and Attitudes of Undereducated Adults in West Virginia, West Virginia Research Coordinating Unit for Vocational Education, Huntington, West Virginia: Marshall University, 1969.

[13] Survey of Adult Basic Education in New Hampshire, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

[14] Perryman, op. cit., p. 56.

[15] Perryman, op. cit., p. 99.

[16] Richard O. Carlson, "Environmental Constraints and Organizational Consequences: The Public School and Its Clients," Behavioral Science and Educational Administration, ed. by Daniel E. Griffiths, The Sixty-Third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press,) 1964, p. 270.

Table 1

SELECTIVITY IN CLIENT-ORGANIZATION RELATIONSHIP IN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL OVER ADMISSION	CLIENT CONTROL OVER OWN PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZATION	
	YES	NO
YES	Type I	Type III
NO	Type II	Type IV

The outcome of the present design of most public school adult education programs resembles Carlson's Type II organization which does not control admission or continuing participation of clients, and clients have full control regarding whether or not they will participate in the offered instruction. When the organization takes no control over whom it serves, the organization will attempt to respond rapidly to the client's goal orientation in an effort to maintain his participation in the organization, even at the expense of not pursuing formally stated objectives--in the case of the adult basic education program the elimination of poverty through the elimination of illiteracy. A program like Carlson's Type II organization survives only as it can appeal to students who do enter the program and remain in it. Of necessity, therefore, the program is sensitive to the goals which prospective and currently enrolled students themselves possess, instead of designing specialized programs for specific clientele. This situation has arisen in ABE because so few elementary-level students enroll voluntarily in present programs that to limit enrollment to them would close the program.

ABE serves the easily reached

The national adult basic education program seeks to serve two distinct student target populations: the easily reached and the unreached. In the Scholes study of ABE through public schools in the Appalachian region the ABE program was found to be serving substantially:

More employed than unemployed	The sample of students worked an average of 36.52 hours per week and had been employed an average of 9.16 years at the same job.
More females than males	68.2% female
More over-35 adults than under-35 adults	Average age was 41.5 years Northern Appalachia 39.5 years Central Appalachia 38.4 years Southern Appalachia 47.4 years Beginning Level (Level I) 49.5 years Level II 40.1 years Level III 36.1 years Whites 36.9 years Blacks 51.3 years
More advanced level students than beginning students	Low attendance of beginning level students made it impossible to adhere to the sample design of obtaining one-third beginning level students, a problem not met at the intermediate and advanced levels.

Obviously, the average ABE student is already upwardly mobile and could not be classified as the stationary hard-core poor.

The Appalachian example

The sample for the 1969 Scholes study of ABE goal determination in the thirteen Appalachian states was a carefully drawn random sample by degrees of urbanization in each geographic region (northern, central, and southern) and by program level of students (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). Therefore, this sample should be a valid representation of ABE in at least one-fourth of the states. It would seem that the easily reached tend to be the already employed, the females, the over-35 adults, and the advanced level students; the unreached tend to be the unemployed, the males, the under-35 adults, and the beginning level students. However, it is of particular importance that Scholes found in Appalachia that:

> *The literacy goal was the first goal choice of males, black students, and beginning level students; while the high school completion goal was the first goal choice of females, white students, and advance level students.*[17]

In short, ABE has responded to the goal orientation of the easily reached, directing the educational program towards accomplishment of high school completion goal. In fact, the 91st Congress has translated the once-operational goal into formally extended national legislation which legitimizes the program's efforts to provide secondary-level instruction for Level III adults.

While the ABE program should be commended for being responsive to the needs and goals of its easy-to-reach population, the organization must still maintain commitment to reaching its heretofore unreached target population. Resistance needs to be raised against complete goal evolution toward employed persons (albeit, underemployed), females, and advanced level students; the unemployed, the males, and the beginning level students need to be reached and taught within the context of ABE.

[17]Scholes, pp. 111-112.

Where we should be going:

Alternate delivery systems for reaching the unreached

More resources, both human and financial, as well as more effective strategies, need to be developed and allocated for the specific purpose of reaching and teaching beginning level students, male students, and unemployed students. ABE administrators and teachers cannot expect the stationary poor to come flocking to their doors asking for an education; they must go out and bring them in or teach them where they are. Perhaps the major obstacle to reaching the ABE program's potential unreached target population is the lack of application of known alternatives which have been developed under the auspices of antipoverty legislation including the Adult Education Act.

Innovations anyone?

Present ABE programs tend to use traditional methods which were developed essentially in the specializing of delivery of education to the middle and working classes. Yet every study of delivery of services to the undereducated stationary poor shows that services must go to the consumer, at least initially. This problem is not unique to adult education. Health services, economic security, Headstart programs, programs for the aged poor--all service agencies have found that they must serve the consumer where he is. Adult Education Act funds for demonstration have been able to isolate several alternative methods of recruiting and retaining clientele who need literacy education. Examples of alternative methods are the provision of transportation to existing programs and mobile learning centers which move from neighborhood to neighborhood rather like a bookmobile. However, for beginning students home instruction has proved particularly effective and also economically practical.

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TITLE III—ADULT EDUCATION

SHORT TITLE

...is title may be cited as the "Adult Edu

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

...is the purpose of this title to encourag...
...al programs for adults to enable them...
...age limitations, to improve their basic...
...r occupational training and more profi...
...ecome more productive and responsible...

DEFINITIONS

...used in this title—
...a "adult" means any individual who ha...

..."adult education" means services or in...
...determined by the Commissi...

Home instruction

In southern Ohio the Appalachian Adult Education Center studied home instruction. Systems for, and learning gains from, three types of delivery of ABE were studied--traditional classrooms, learning centers, and home instruction.[18] Table 2 shows the comparative average achievement gains for the three types of programs for 100 hours of instruction.

[18] Traditional classrooms consisted of six hours of instruction per week (two evenings) in which all students received about the same instruction. They could take materials home. Staff were professionals. Learning centers were open twelve hours per week. Staff consisted of professionals and paraprofessionals. Instruction was individualized; however, clients could not take materials home. Home instruction was offered by successful ABE graduates trained as teachers who recruited truly hard-core homes, and diagnosed, delivered materials to, and returned each week to work with clients in their homes. All paraprofessionals had a back-up professional resource person and worked out of a learning center. Max Way, ABE Organization, Materials, and Instruction (Morehead, KY: Appalachian Adult Education Center, Ohio State Module, 1970).

Table 2

ACHIEVEMENT GAINS IN MONTHS FOR

100 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

	TRADITIONAL CLASSROOMS	LEARNING CENTERS	HOME INSTRUCTION
Reading	8 months	19 months	24 months
Arithmetic	9 months	17 months	20 months

The gains in the noncognitive or attitudinal areas were phenomenal in home instruction. The AAEC also found that home instruction is surprisingly inexpensive in comparison with other delivery systems and that dropout rates virtually vanished, since people almost had to move to drop out. The concept was replicated with even more exaggerated gains in northeast Georgia. Obviously, to develop a radical delivery system requires a radical adjustment of the training and job descriptions of personnel.

The concept of home instruction was developed in the Adult Armchair Education project in core-city Philadelphia. It was found that the use of male paraprofessionals raised the recruitment of males. The Maine State Department of Education has reported that recruitment and retention of Level I adult students has ceased to be a major problem since all instruction of Level I students was moved to the home, i.e., to the "kitchen-table concept." The use of mass media as part of the home instruction unit has also been demonstrated.

Public Law 7-
91st Congress, H. R
April 13, 1970

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The fare for getting there:

Consequences of serving primarily elementary-level students

(level I and II) with current evaluation and funding patterns

There are three potential populations of students who can be served under the Act as amended: (1) the elementary-level (Level I or II) adult who is either very poor or in danger of being so because his low level of skills permits for no flexibility in the market-place (the legislation mentions likelihood to become dependent); (2) the very poor Level III or secondary-level student (the March, 1971, Current Population Report shows that while those with less than twelve years of schooling account for only thirty-five percent of employed men between the ages of 25 and 64, they account for sixty-three percent of those with less than $3,000 annual income); and (3) the nonpoor Level III student, who also could suffer economic deprivation from lack of flexibility of skills, but who is presumably less vulnerable than the elementary level adult.

Delivery System + time + money = goal

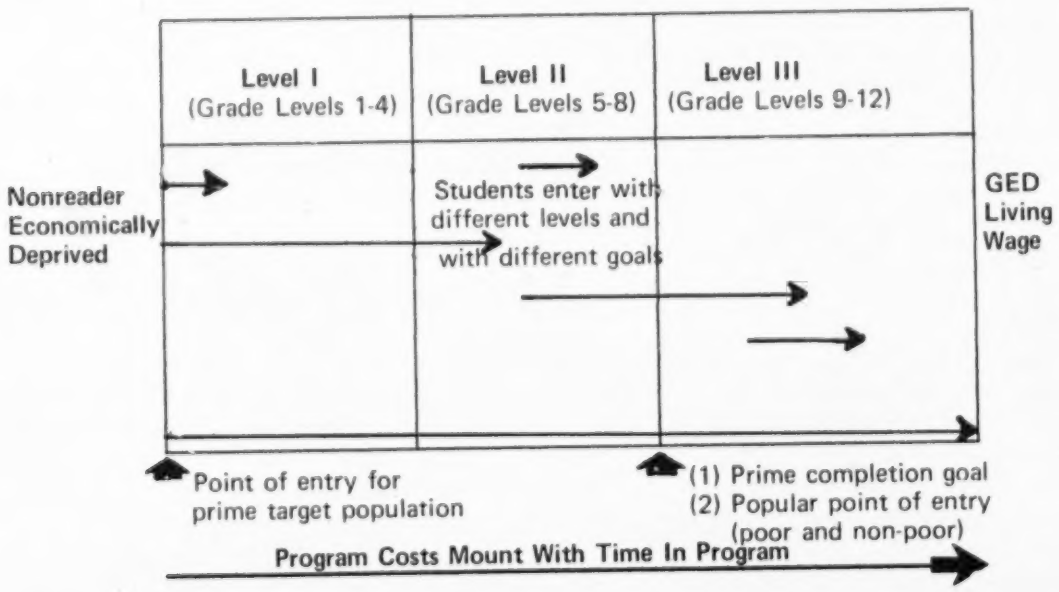
It is obvious from the figure below that adult education organizations seeking to fulfill the intent of the Adult Education Act can have an end goal of a living wage and high school equivalency regardless of the starting level of their students if they do so consciously with appropriate delivery systems for each level, appropriate time, and a commensurate funding level.

To refer back to Carlson's typology, programs specializing for and limiting enrollment to specific populations need to be developed. To facilitate changes in methods of attracting and holding Level I and male students, many state adult education plans under the Adult Education Act of 1966 would need to be revised. In the past many state

Figure 1

Adult Education Act of 1966

The following diagram shows the three potential student populations in terms of the means goal of high school completion for employability



plans have forbidden use of paraprofessional teachers, home instruction, or even the provision of transportation to existing facilities. In some states, teacher certification regulations also are a hindrance to alternative delivery systems. With the publication of the new regulations under P. L. 91-230, early summer, 1972, many of these restrictions have been removed. There will be more flexibility at the local and state department levels.

Evaluation and Funding Levels

Adult education programs will not be effective in serving a broader target population (inclusive of elementary level) unless present methods for evaluation of programs and present funding levels are adjusted.

The two main methods of evaluation have been: (1) annual average grade level gains in reading and arithmetic; and (2) annual percentage of graduates employed (which assumes graduation at either the eighth grade or more usually the GED level as well as employment).

With present funding levels, (the 1971 appropriation was twenty-five percent of the authorization level), the national program has had an end goal of high school equivalency, serving mostly poor and nonpoor secondary level students. Students who meet other personal goals such as learning to read the Bible, sign a check, and so on, and then leave the program have been considered dropouts because these goals are not measurable in terms of stated objectives of the organization. The reasons for catering to secondary level students are four-fold:

(1) They are easier to reach;

(2) They are easier to teach for traditionally-trained teachers;

(3) Their achievement rates are two to four times more rapid than those of elementary-level students (as shown by studies of Project 100,000 Armed Services personnel);[19]

(4) The economic return is much quicker, particularly in the case of the poor secondary-level student, because he is more quickly employable at a living wage.

It would seem that the education of the nonpoor secondary-level student is the responsibility of the local school district rather than of the national program. Local adult educational programs (i.e., community education) need to be institutionalized through the easily reached student.

Level 1 + ABE = 0

As shown in Figure I, so long as success is judged by the criteria of annual achievement gain and employability at a decent job, the adult education program cannot afford the elementary-level student in the interests of its own preservation. It has been shown that it can eliminate some poverty by educating the poor secondary-level student; therefore, it must take that alternative, since the secondary-level student does show rapid achievement gains and higher end employment rates.[20] Also, the secondary-level student can and will adjust to traditional (already operating) methods of delivery of education.

Level 1 + ABE = $.00

Secondly, considering the size of the total target population in relation to present funding levels, adult education programs cannot afford the

[19]Howard H. McFann, HumRRO Research on Project 100,000, Professional Paper 37-69 (Alexandria, Virginia: Human Resources Research Organization, December, 1969,) p. 37.

[20]The AAEC West Virginia three-year follow-up study of eighty-five secondary-level ABE students (half welfare, half non-welfare, urban and rural) shows that seventy-six for whom beginning and ending income data could be collected have a combined annual increase in income of $430,888. Of eight-three surviving subjects, only five have returned to welfare. However, wages for some of those now off welfare are uncomfortably close to welfare income (including relief payments, food stamps, and medical care.)

added dollar cost of elementary-level students, because:

(1) the alternate delivery systems which must be used require additional training of personnel and other costs of new organizational designs (although the Appalachian Adult Education Center's cost analyses have not found such alternate systems to be exorbitant); and

(2) the length of time of each ndividual in the program is much longer. (The experience of the Appalachian Adult Education Center Ohio State Module shows the average time in home instruction from nonreader to GED completion to be four fifty-week years.)

Conclusions

The conclusions of this paper for adult educators and Congressmen responsible for the national adult basic education program would seem to be that:

(1) the intent of the Adult Education Act of 1966 is to eliminate poverty;

(2) the unreached are the prime target population of young, unemployed, elementary-level males;

(3) the present easily-reached and served population has the goal of secondary completion;

(4) alternate delivery systems exist which do reach and teach the prime target population;

(5) present methods of evaluation defeat the purpose of the legislation;

(6) present funding levels, although properly eliminating secondary-level completion goals, actually eliminate service to elementary-level students because of the added expense of service to the lower levels and the punitive results of evaluation of that service.

Adult education has been assigned a task by the American society through the voice of Congress. That task is to cooperate in the elimination of extreme poverty in the United States. To qualify for bigger jobs, we must be successful in this one. But to be successful requires the partnership of adult education and Congress. There needs to be: (1) more aware and deliberate organization to meet goals on the part of adult educators; and (2) more commitment to those goals on the part of Congressmen.

ERIC Clearinghouse
OCT 27 1972
on Adult Education

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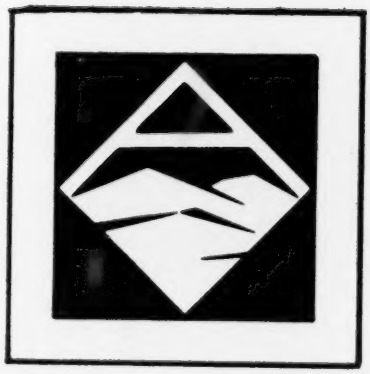

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